

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 17 and 23 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend Claims 1-3, 5, 8, 18, 24-26, 28, 30, 32 and 34-38 to read as follows:

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1. (Amended) A multi-domain alignment active-matrix liquid crystal display device comprising;

first and second transparent insulating plates arranged to oppose each other;

said first plate having disposed thereon a plurality of scanning lines and a plurality of signal lines, thin-film transistors provided in the vicinity of intersections between the scanning lines and signal lines, and pixel electrodes connected to the thin-film transistors;

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said second plate having a black matrix provided with openings at areas that oppose said pixel electrodes, a color layer and counterelectrodes provided so as to oppose said pixel electrodes;

a liquid crystal being sandwiched between the opposing first and second plates and being controlled by voltage impressed across said pixel electrodes and said counterelectrodes;

wherein an orientation layer is provided on each pixel electrode of said first plate via an insulating film,

wherein said orientation layer is formed into a curved surface and orient molecules of the liquid crystal aligned in a direction normal to the curved surface of said orientation layer, and

wherein at least one columnar spacer having a diameter varying along its axis is

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provided between the two opposing plates for regulating a panel gap therebetween.

2. (Amended) The device according to claim 1, wherein said at least one columnar spacer has an end portion on one side thereof that is disposed approximately at a center of said orientation layer formed on said first plate.

3. (Amended) The device according to claim 2, wherein said orientation layer formed on said first plate defines a cavity recessed toward said first plate in a cross section taken along a line normal to said plate; and

wherein said at least one columnar spacer has a diameter that becomes progressively smaller in the direction of said second plate.

5. (Amended) A multi-domain alignment active-matrix liquid crystal display device comprising first and second transparent insulating plates arranged to oppose each other;
said first plate having disposed thereon a plurality of scanning lines and a plurality of signal lines, thin-film transistors provided in the vicinity of intersections between the scanning lines and signal lines, and pixel electrodes connected to the thin-film transistors;

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said second plate having a black matrix provided with openings at areas that oppose said pixel electrodes, a color layer and counterelectrodes provided so as to oppose said pixel electrodes;

a liquid crystal being sandwiched between the opposing first and second plates and being controlled by voltage impressed across said pixel electrodes and said counterelectrodes

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wherein each of said pixel electrodes on said first plate and an orientation layer formed on said pixel electrode defines a curved surface, and

wherein at least one columnar spacer having a diameter varying along its axis is provided between the two opposing plates for regulating a panel gap therebetween.

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8. (Amended) The device according to claim 5, wherein said at least one columnar spacer has an end portion on one side thereof that is disposed approximately at the center of the pixel electrode formed on said first plate.

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18. (Amended) A multi-domain alignment active-matrix liquid crystal display device comprising;
first and second transparent plates arranged to oppose each other;
a liquid crystal being sandwiched between the first and second plates, and
pixel electrodes disposed on one of said plates and
counterelectrodes disposed on the other of said plates and adapted to apply voltage to the liquid crystal across the pixel electrodes and the counterelectrodes;

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wherein an orientation layer is provided on each pixel electrode of one of said plates via an insulating film,

wherein said orientation layer is formed into a curved or slanted surface so as to orient molecules of the liquid crystal in a direction normal to the curved or slanted surface of said orientation layer, and

wherein at least one columnar spacer is provided between the two opposing plates for regulating a panel gap between said plates, said at least one columnar spacer disposed approximately at a center of said orientation layer on a pixel.

05 24. (Amended) The device according to claim 25, wherein said orientation layer is adapted to orient the liquid crystal molecules substantially at right angles to the planes of said plates.

25. (Amended) A multi-domain alignment active-matrix liquid crystal display device comprising;

first and second transparent plates arranged to oppose each other;

a liquid crystal being sandwiched between the first and second plates, and

pixel electrodes disposed on one of said plates and counterelectrodes disposed on the other of said plates and adapted to apply voltage to the liquid crystal across the pixel electrode and the counterelectrodes;

wherein an orientation layer is provided on each pixel electrode of one of said plates;

wherein said orientation layer and said pixel electrode are formed into a curved or slanted surface;

wherein at least one columnar spacer having a diameter that varies along its axis is provided between the two opposing plates for regulating a panel gap between said plates, and said at least one columnar spacer disposed approximately at a center of said orientation layer on a pixel.

26. (Amended) The device according to claim 25, wherein said pixel electrode defines a cavity recessed toward the counterelectrode.

28. (Amended) The device according to claim 27, wherein said columnar spacer has a diameter increasing toward the counterelectrode opposing the pixel electrode.

30. (Amended) The device according to claim 25, wherein said pixel electrode defines a curved or slanted protrusion protruding toward the counterelectrode.

32. (Amended) The device according to claim 31, wherein said columnar spacer has a diameter decreasing toward the counterelectrode opposing the pixel electrode.

34. (Amended) A multi-domain alignment active-matrix liquid crystal display device comprising;

- first and second transparent plates arranged to oppose each other;
- a liquid crystal being sandwiched between the first and second plates, and
- pixel electrodes disposed on one of said plates and counterelectrodes disposed on the other of said plates and adapted to apply voltage to the liquid crystal across the pixel electrodes and the counterelectrodes;

wherein an orientation layer is provided at least on each pixel electrode disposed on one of said plates, and

wherein at least one columnar spacer having a side surface that is slanted or inclined is provided between the two opposing plates for regulating a panel gap between said plates.

35. (Amended) The device according to claim 34, wherein said side surface of said at

least one columnar spacer is adapted to pre-align molecules of the liquid crystal surrounding each of the columnar spacers centering thereat.

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36. (Amended) The device according to claim 35, wherein said at least one columnar spacer has a diameter varying along its axis.

37. (Amended) The device according to claim 35, wherein said at least one columnar spacer has a diameter decreasing or increasing toward one end thereof.

38. (Amended) The device according to claim 35, wherein said side surface is adapted to pre-align molecules of the liquid crystal substantially parallel to the sidewall.

Please add the following new Claim 42:

42. (New) A multi-domain alignment active-matrix liquid crystal display device comprising;
first and second transparent plates arranged to oppose each other;
a liquid crystal being sandwiched between the first and second plates, and
pixel electrodes disposed on one of said plates and counterelectrodes disposed on the other of said plates and adapted to apply voltage to the liquid crystal across the pixel electrodes and the counterelectrodes;

wherein an orientation layer is provided at least on each pixel electrode disposed on one of said plates, and

wherein at least one columnar spacer is provided on said orientation layer between the two opposing plates for regulating a panel gap between said plates.